



CHENG Ting Ting: Night Walk

17 September – 22 October, 2022

Gallery EXIT presents CHENG Ting Ting's latest solo exhibition 'Night Walk', showcasing the artist's new works created in the year since her return to Hong Kong after graduating from a master's degree in Norway in 2021. During her two years of studying abroad in Norway, the artist experienced an environment, climate, and general atmosphere of life and creation entirely different from that in Hong Kong. The immense difference between the two places has caused a considerable impact on and transformation in Cheng's creation. The relatively slow pace of life and creation in Norway allowed the artist to freely explore different directions and techniques of painting. The exhibition will open on Saturday 17 September, and will run till 22 October 2022.

Cheng's works always unfold with chaotic brushstrokes and colour blocks, followed by the construction of interactions and interconnections between layers. In her previous works, viewers can identify certain things and narratives, while her new works tend to present a sense of general confusion, like the parts or afterimages of things. The paintings have been washed and painted over, until only some vaguely familiar silhouettes remain. Colours blend together, and underneath, details of the scene are hidden within the complex and chaotic brushstrokes, barely glimpsed by the viewer.

Cheng's sojourn in Norway has made her more sensitive to the luminosity and colour tones around her. One factor is Norway's extreme daylight hours, with short days in winter and more than three times as much sunlight in summer. The artist recalls when she first returned to Hong Kong, as she stepped out of the hotel where she had been quarantined for twenty-one days, her first reaction was: 'It's so bright.' The indoor lighting of the hotel room was essentially different from the outdoor sunlight. She feels that she can even sense the difference in colour temperature. For instance, the daylight of the city of Bergen in Norway where she lived, probably due to its mostly overcast and rainy climate, is a kind of blueish green. The two years living in Norway had made the artist sensitive to light, and she hopes to manifest in the exhibition space and her paintings this emphasis of natural light environment, the textures of light and its subtle changes.

Norway's long winters mean that life is mostly lived indoors. This also leads to a tendency of the local people to value introspection and solitude. Gradually Cheng also got used to being alone in a quiet environment for an extended period of time, and through careful observation of newly acquired habits, she attempted to understand those details yet to be unravelled. Slowly, the artist became aware of the similarity between her usual painting practice, and the repetitive tasks and simple hand movements, activities of a repetitive nature such as printmaking, sewing, dyeing and writing. Like origami, which is to fold a crease into the paper, forming it into some object, an envelope or a greeting card. These simple and pure actions, are similar to the process of filtration, revealing the fundamentals of these observations little by little.

Cheng believes that her creative direction is inherently fluid, her works change in response to the different environments she inhabits; accumulated personal experiences and her current state in turn lead to changes in her creations. In the face of the interconnection and influence between various factors, Cheng adopts a relatively passive attitude, like a bystander who witnesses the transformation of things. The unceasing creative action of the artist and its essence of process is

no different from the engagement in physical exercise. While repeated actions may seem devoid of meaning, little by little they affect the inner workings and habits of both body and mind. Through the interaction with brushstrokes and materials, the artist slowly pieces together some accumulated and elusive thoughts.

The creative trajectory of this exhibition apparently re-enacts the artist's late night experience in Bergen. During one late night in her first winter there, as she was about to head home and upon finding that there was no more public transport running from the city centre to where she lived, she resorted to walking, following the light rail tracks, bracing the cold and fatigue, staggering forward amidst strange neighbourhoods. After walking for nearly four hours, she spotted a light decoration on a balcony from afar, and recognising it as something she usually saw from home, she knew that she was finally close to home. The moment upon reaching home, she curled up and fell into an exhausted slumber.

It was only when Cheng has nearly completed most of the paintings that she became aware of the connection between that particular late night experience and her own creation. In addition to being an unforgettable experience, it was also a process of adapting to various changes, including those of the self and the transient world at large. The projections of various ineffable emotions and anxieties can only be unravelled and slowly emerge through repeated creative processes. Like the association of that late night experience, artistic creation is a process of memory reconstruction in hindsight.

鄭婷婷:《夜行》

2022年9月17日至10月22日

安全口畫廊呈獻鄭婷婷最新個展《夜行》，展出藝術家自2021年挪威碩士畢業回港後這一年來的最新創作。藝術家在挪威留學的兩年間，感受到當地與香港截然不同的環境、天氣以至整個生活及創作氛圍。兩地的巨大差異對鄭氏的創作產生了一定的衝擊及改變。在挪威的生活、創作節奏都相對較慢，令藝術家更能隨意探索不同的繪畫方向和手法。展覽於9月17日(星期六)開幕，展期至2022年10月22日。

鄭氏的創作一貫以混亂的筆觸和色塊開展，再於層疊間建立互動和承接。從她以往的作品中，觀者可以在畫中辨別一些事物及敘事，新的作品則傾向呈現一種整體的迷濛感，就似是事物的部分或殘像。畫作都經過一番洗擦、塗抹，最後只遺留下一些似曾相識的身影。不同的顏色交融在一起，底層複雜錯亂的筆觸，景物的細節藏在其中，觀者只能隱若窺見。

鄭氏在挪威旅居的經歷，令她對周遭的光度和色調變得更加敏銳。其中一個因素是挪威極端的日照時間，冬天日照短，夏天的陽光卻是三倍有多。藝術家憶起剛回到香港，步出隔離了二十一天的酒店時，她的第一個反應是「很光」，因為酒店房間的室內照明跟戶外的日光是截然不同的。她覺得自己甚至能感覺到色溫的差別，例如她所居住的挪威城市卑爾根可能因為天氣長期偏陰多雨，日間是偏藍綠調的。兩年在挪威的生活使藝術家對光線變得敏銳，她希望展場及畫作能呈現創作時重視自然光的環境、光的觸感與其微妙的變化。

挪威漫長的冬季令當地的生活日常都以室內為主。這也令當地人普遍更注重內省自處。鄭氏亦慢慢習慣在寧靜的環境長期獨處，從中仔細觀察自己新成的習慣。藝術家漸漸察覺一些有著重覆性的活動如版畫製作、縫紉、染布和寫作等，均延長了瞬間、調慢了時間，以慢板檢視一些未能疏理的細節。又例如摺紙，把紙張摺一道痕，隨後形成某種物件，如信封和咭品等，僅僅是一些簡單純粹的動作，卻如濾紙般逐少逐少隔除雜質。

鄭氏認為她的創作方向本質上是流動的，作品回應她所身處環境的不同而轉變，個人經歷的累積，亦使當下自身的狀態面對種種因素的牽連和影響，鄭氏的取態是較為被動的，就好像是一個旁觀者目睹著事物的變化。藝術家無間的恆常創作，過程的本質與投入於體能運動無異。反覆的動作看似意義不大，卻會漸漸影響內在的身心運行和習慣。藝術家透過與筆觸和物料的互動，把一些不斷積累又難以捉摸的思緒慢慢拼湊。

這次展覽猶如重歷藝術家在卑爾根的一次夜歸經歷。那是她首個在當地經歷冬季的某個夜深時分，打算回家時卻發現由市中心開往住處的尾班車經已開出，所以只能徒步回家，跟隨輕鐵軌道，抵著低溫和倦怠緩緩在陌生的環境前行。走了近四個小時，直至看見遠方一個露台的掛燈飾，確認那就是平日從家中往外看的景物後，才知道自己已離目的地不遠，回家後馬上蜷縮著身體累倒睡去。

鄭氏也是在大部分畫作臨近完成時，才想起那次夜歸經歷與自身的關係。除了是一個深刻的體驗，那亦是藝術家適應種種轉變的過程，包括自身和外在不變的無常；種種不能言喻的情緒和不安感的投射，只能透過重覆的創作過程慢慢梳理和浮現。藝術創作跟那次經歷的聯想一樣，都是一種後知後覺的記憶重組過程。